

CIRCULAR LEADERSHIP

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

BY: Terrence P. Mastandrea
Fire Chief
Lake Zurich Fire/Rescue Department
Lake Zurich, IL

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ABSTRACT

The (research) problem facing the Lake Zurich Fire/Rescue Department (IL) was identifying, planning and providing for future emergency service needs in the rapidly expanding fire district. The purpose of this research project was to develop a process to identify, complete, maintain and evaluate the operational and administrative needs of the department under a “Circular Leadership” structure. Because of the type of data required to formulate a common approach to solving the problem, both an action and evaluative methodology was used when identifying the following research questions.

- 1) Who should be part of the decisionmaking process?
- 2) How could we spread the workload amongst the department?
- 3) How could we identify all the planning issues ?
- 4) How were we going to lead, motivate and sell the idea?
- 5) What was the right balance of delegation and empowerment?

Research information for the project was solicited and developed through the use of a survey (Appendix B), strategic planning sessions (Appendix C) and a literature review. The survey and subsequent strategic planning session portion of the project was used to develop both a new ten year **Comprehensive Plan** and a ‘**Circular Leadership**’ decisionmaking structure by addressing the following planning questions; (1) what were the fire station needs would be for the next ten years; (2) what were the new vehicle needs were for the next ten years; (3) what were the new personnel needs were for the next ten years and how they would be assigned; (4) what response changes will be needed in the next ten years; (5) what they perceive as the

Fire/Rescue Departments future goals and mission; and (6) what they believe the future Fire/Rescue values should be.

Once the survey information was collected and tabulated, a department Strategic Planning Session was held to discuss, review and prioritize the results into a workable plan. The results (consensus based) of the Strategic Planning Session were then integrated into the Fire/Rescue Department Comprehensive Plan.

As a result of the literature review, strategic planning sessions and survey results, it was the authors recommendation to continue the practice of “Circular Leadership” in the Lake Zurich Fire/Rescue Department. That recommendation was supported by increased employee participation, higher morale, progressive/innovative ideas and enhanced communication with a shared vision and goals.

Recommendations included; establish manageable committees with personnel from each shift so that follow-up work and updates could be handled daily without delaying the project by waiting until someone was on duty; creating a department task board to identify all department working projects and allow daily status checks/updates pertaining to the project to be made; schedule regular officer/staff meetings to provide enhanced communication on department issues and projects with the opportunity for those personally involved to attend and explain their progress; reinforce the open door policy by the Chief for anyone on the department that needed guidance, direction or resources to accomplish their tasks; development of an employee incentive program to reward those employees who achieved desired goals. That recommendation was based on keeping employees motivated and providing some recognition for a job well done.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Abstract.....	i
Table of Contents.....	iii
Introduction.....	1
Background and Significance.....	3
Literature Review.....	7
Procedures.....	13
Results.....	14
Discussion.....	18
Recommendations.....	21
References.....	26
Appendix A (Survey Letter).....	27
Appendix B (Survey).....	28
Appendix C (Strategic Planning Results).....	30

INTRODUCTION

The Village of Lake Zurich, IL is a mixed occupancy community located approximately 30 miles northwest of Chicago. Over the last eight years, the Village and neighboring communities within the Lake Zurich Fire Protection District experienced a substantial increase in residential and commercial growth. That growth was driven by families and businesses that wanted to get out of the busy city atmosphere and experience the life style advantages of a more rural setting.

The research problem was identifying, planning and providing for future emergency service needs in the expanding fire district. In order to keep up with the service demands, the Fire/Rescue Department had to develop and implement a strategic plan to deal with growth issues such as; number and location of stations, number and assignment of personnel and required fleet inventory.

In an effort to address and progressively manage the rapidly changing and expanding department, a process and structure for identifying, managing and evaluating current and future needs of the department had to be created. A department survey with subsequent strategic planning sessions were held to identify current and future operational and administrative needs of the department. That process proved to be very successful in identifying specific and categorized department needs in a priority basis. The needs identification process resulted in a listing of projects that needed to be developed, managed and administered by the limited administrative staff.

The purpose of this research project was to develop a process to complete, maintain and evaluate the operational and administrative needs of the department. Because of the type of data required to formulate a common approach to solving the problem, both an action and evaluative methodology was used when identifying the following research questions.

- 6) Who should be part of the decisionmaking process?
- 7) How could we spread the workload amongst the department?
- 8) How could we identify all the planning issues ?
- 9) How were we going to lead, motivate and sell the idea?
- 10) What was the right balance of delegation and empowerment?

The development of a system that provided individual ownership in accomplishing priority tasks of the department while maintaining administrative control was the goal of the project. Working with a limited budget and regulated by tax caps, the financial ability to hire additional personnel to perform the identified tasks was not an option. Traditional methods of management were beginning to fade giving way to a more participatory structure for organizational development. Private industry opened the eyes of many fire service leaders to new methods and opportunities for employee participation in the organizations decision process. The proven benefits of employee participation included such things as better morale, increased production, a greater degree of personal pride, a sense of ownership, respect and recognition.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

The Lake Zurich Fire/Rescue Department, IL was organized in 1988 when the Village of Lake Zurich merged the Paramedic Department with the Volunteer Fire Department. That merge was essential based on the extensive building growth that had taken place and subsequent population needs for increased emergency services. At the time of the merge, the Fire/Rescue Department staffed one station in the center of a 25-mile fire district with a daily staff of four full-time cross-trained Firefighter/Paramedics.

In 1990, the Fire/Rescue Department developed a five year plan that would enhance the delivery of emergency services out into the fire district in a more timely and effective manner. The plan was developed by Fire Chief Terry Mastandrea and supported by Fire Protection Consultant Richard Solomons report that was provided to the fire district in 1989. The primary focus of the plan addressed by the Fire Consultant dealt with fire station planning and followed Insurance Services Office (ISO) guidelines as well as National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recommendations for fire station geographical location and travel distance. In 1990, the Fire Chief built on that plan and developed a more comprehensive plan for implementation. The plan was broken down into three main categories; stations, personnel and vehicles. General planning included station location and site purchases, personnel needs based on available funding, and the type of equipment that was to be housed in each station. The majority of planning during that stage was completed by the Chief, Fire District Trustees, and elected Village Officials. After completion of that plan in 1990, it sat in readiness for the next two years until funding became available to begin implementation.

In 1992, the concept of “Circular Leadership” became a necessary reality for the Lake Zurich Fire/Rescue Department in achieving many of the required tasks. The department had only four full-time firefighter/Paramedics on duty each day along with the Fire Chief so the use of “Circular Leadership” was somewhat easy to implement and control. “Circular Leadership” was a concept where everyone on the department had the opportunity to get involved with the current and future decision process of the department. After decisions were made by group consensus, individuals were given the responsibility and authority to coordinate and administer the specific programs and projects.

Although employees were given the opportunity to administer and coordinate projects or programs, some did not feel they had complete control or clear enough direction to administer the program as they desired. The issue of empowerment coupled with the lack of communication was determined to be the common link that stifled the “Circular Leadership” concept from its full potential.

Another problem identified that hindered the communication process was the three-day shift rotation. Many projects or programs required daily attention or follow-up action and when the employee in charge of the project only worked every third day, the Chief by default typically had to intervene and make those necessary decisions. That intervention caused some employees to feel they were being micro-managed with a lack of trust on the Chiefs part as the basis for the intervention.

Regular feedback at department officer meetings seemed to suggest that circular communication was one of our department weaknesses. That feedback was reinforced by findings developed during the authors first Executive Fire Officer Class “Executive Development”. During that class, the author reviewed his departments Observer Assessment Forms generated from the Leadership Behavior Questionnaire submitted to employees prior to attending the class. The questionnaire indicated lower employee rated scores in the Transformational Leadership Behavior category that dealt with Communication Leadership and Trust Leadership. In the Self-Assessment of the same questionnaire, the author perceived and rated himself higher than his employees in those same categories. It was evident that while the author believed he was providing open communication with clear direction and trust, the employees in the assessment group felt different.

In an effort to enhance communication, the Chief assigned a staff officer as the liaison for each committee and task force. The thought process was to make sure the committees had clear direction from above and a method to expedite the decision process. That process proved successful in enhancing the communication process but actually became a bottleneck in the decision process. With only a limited number of staff officer's (4), the workload and follow-up necessary from the liaison staff officers, who were also assigned as shift Captains, became over bearing and actually slowed the process. Personnel assigned as committee or task force Chairman became frustrated and tired of waiting while staff officers found time to review their ideas, thoughts and proposals.

Another problem created by assigning staff officers as the liaison was the issue of trust. Personnel, some with more knowledge and experience than the liaison assigned to a specific program or project, did not feel they were empowered to make the decisions that affected their project. Many times the committee chairman had to explain their thoughts and ideas several times at different levels of the organization before the Chief would even review the concept. Empowerment became a big issue for both the committee personnel and the staff officers. On one hand, the committee wanted to make the call on issues that pertained to their project without the approval of the Liaison and on the other hand, the staff officers wanted to be that next level of approval based on their ranked position. A method of eliminating the lack of trust factor and showing a sense of empowerment to the employees while maintaining staffs ability to manage became necessary.

This research project was directly related to the Executive Fire Officer Program course on Executive Leadership. Research pertained to subject matter covered in Unit 4: Managing Multiple Roles, Unit 6: Fostering Creativity and Innovation, Unit 7; Assessing Organizational Culture, and Unit 8: Developing Decision making Skills. In order to provide an unbiased solution to the problem, many of the specific topics covered in the Executive Leadership class had to be researched and reviewed. The entire Executive Fire Officer Program curriculum provided me with the knowledge to analyze the problem, establish my purpose, direct me in my research methods and help provide a well developed solution to the issue of institutionalizing “Circular Leadership” on our department. Progressive organizations constantly change and managers must often find consensus from those that actually perform the tasks before many decisions are made.

Many times the best people to plan, direct and manage are those that have the knowledge, experience and opportunity to perform the specific tasks and understand the true needs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The intent of the Literature review was to research, review and learn leadership qualities from those successful leaders and managers that have utilized “Circular Leadership” methods for conducting business. The focus of the literature review dealt with trends that addressed the human side of leadership and participatory processes. William Rosenbach, one of the authors of the book *Leadership, Challenges for Today's Managers* helped the researcher prepare his mindset prior to review of the vast literature resources. He wrote “ Knowledge of finance, marketing, production and personnel is important, of course; but it often produces the kind of leaders who, although able to name every single tree, may fail to notice that the forest is burning,” Clemens and Mayer write. “What is needed is a broader view of leadership grounded in literature that focuses not on specialized techniques but rather on the vast human side of the leadership equation.” (Rosenbach, 1989, p 150)

The Literature Review provided progressive and quality information that was helpful in addressing the research problem. Participatory leadership qualities and empowerment philosophies were the main focus of the research collected. Once the research was collected, the author had to decide on what he wanted to accomplish from the findings. In a book written by Max Depree called *Leadership is an Art* the concept that keyed in on the authors thoughts and perspective was best addressed by his statement “ What is it most of us really want from work?

We would like to find the most effective, most productive, most rewarding way of working together. We would like to know that our work process uses all the appropriate and pertinent resources: human, physical, and financial. We would like a work process and relationships that meet our personal needs for belonging, for contributing, for meaningful work, for the opportunity to make a commitment, for the opportunity to grow and be at least reasonably in control of our own destinies. Finally we'd like someone to say thank you!"

(Depree, 1989, p21)

Once we determined what we wanted out of the research material, an attempt to break the issues down into specific needs was made. The first issue we addressed was that of Empowerment. Many employees felt they were not fully empowered to do their job once they were given the assignment. Having a staff liaison constantly looking over their shoulder or reviewing each step in the process left them with a sense that management did not have faith in their ability to do the project or a distrust in their decision making skills. Based on those attitudes, the use of staff officers as liaisons was discontinued. We as staff officers discussed and agreed that once employees were given an assignment and a direction to follow, we should let them make the decisions that affect their project.

The practice of utilizing the most knowledgeable and experienced person to fill the chairman and committee roles with direct communication with the Chief was implemented. That decision was supported by an excerpt from the same book of Max Depree, *Leadership is an Art* when he wrote "I believe that the most effective contemporary management process is participative management. It begins with the belief in the potential of people. Participative

management without a belief in that potential and without convictions about the gifts people bring to organizations is a contradiction in terms. Participative management arises out of the heart and out of the philosophy about people. It cannot be added to, or subtracted from, a corporate policy manual as though it were one more managerial tool. Everyone has the right and the duty to influence decision-making and to understand the results. Participatory management guarantees that decisions will not be arbitrary, secret, or closed to questioning”. (Depree, 1989, p22)

Because of the high work load placed on the limited members of the Lake Zurich Fire/Rescue Department, participatory or “Circular leadership” was not a luxury, it was a necessity. In our situation, the lack of employees available to carry out the required tasks was the driving force behind “Circular Leadership”. Research also indicated that was occurring in companies that had consolidated or downsized. In a book written by Peter Block entitled *The Empowered Manager- Positive Political Skills at Work* he wrote, most large companies are reducing the number of employees as fast as they can, often eliminating whole layers of management in their attempt to be more efficient. This effort at pushing responsibility downward is a direct assault on the bureaucratic methods and mind-set that characterize life in most organizations”. (Block, 1987, p1)

That mind-set was no different on the Lake Zurich Fire/Rescue Department as far as the staff went. The concept of sharing ideas was readily accepted by staff but giving employees the power to make decisions and set their own direction without staff intervention was difficult. The whole issue of power was another concern that had to be managed. Empowerment, put another

way by author Warren Bennis in his book *Leaders, The Strategies for Taking Charge*, “leaders empower others to translate intention into reality and sustain it. This does not mean that leaders must relinquish power, or that followers must continually challenge authority. It does mean that power must become a unit of exchange-an active, changing token in creative, productive, and communicative transactions. Effective leaders will ultimately reap the human harvest of their efforts by the simple action of power’s reciprocal :empowerment “. (Bennis, 1985, p80)

Whenever employees are given the ability to participate, they must be given the ability to make decisions (power) or they will lose interest fast. Jay Hall, author of the book *The Competence Process* addressed that very concern. He wrote, “ Participation is an invitation to share power. When managers create opportunities for those affected by decisions to share in making them, they are inviting influence. They are asking, for all intents and purposes, that people share in the manager’s traditional power to decide. They are making them partners in the decision-making process. And they are sharing control and ownership of the work to be done”. (Hall, 1980, p65)

In order to make the “Circular Leadership” concept work in the Lake Zurich Fire/Rescue Department and ease the concern of staff in the shift of power, parameters were set and general guidelines established for the various projects. Staff was willing to give up some of the power if parameters were set. Most of the time the parameters centered on available funds for the project, expected timetables, desired results and based on those priorities as established in the department comprehensive plan.

Once the staff understood the concept and benefits of shared power, the issue of motivating the employees had to be addressed. We understood that we as staff could delegate any assignment we deemed necessary to our subordinates and demand results within established timetables. The fact that we wanted productive and progressive results not just results was the driving force for identifying and developing a motivation plan. As F.A. Manske wrote in his book entitled *Secrets of Effective Leadership* “The fuel that runs successful organizations is the pride and sense of accomplishment that comes from striving for and achieving high levels of performance. Employees want to be part of a winning team. Successful teamwork is exciting, upbeat and offers personal rewards such as status, recognition and, in many cases, additional remuneration”. (Manske, 1987, p25).

We began to address the motivation factor by allowing employees to be part of the decisionmaking team. Committees and task forces were established and made up of interested personnel and not based on rank. In an article written in *The Voice Magazine* (1990), Assistant Chief Julius E. Hallas wrote, “ True leaders don’t have to make all the decisions themselves. Especially during non-emergency conditions, we must be willing to allow participation in the decisionmaking process to come from the entire organization. An excellent forum for this process is, of course, the utilization of committees or quality circles”. (Hallas, 1990, p12)

Financial motivation in the form of overtime pay was also justified and budgeted to compensate or reward those that participated on committees for their time spent bettering the department. Giving employees the opportunity to work on a project based on their interest and experience without regard for rank was the real key to their motivation. The sense of pride

flourished as projects became realities along with the upbeat attitudes and personal recognition generated by their peers.

The Lake Zurich Fire/Rescue Department held strategic planning sessions with all employees to gather input into current and future needs. After the sharing of thoughts by the organization, a priority list was established and a vision created that was clear, realistic and aggressive. The plan included building new stations, purchasing new equipment and hiring/promoting additional personnel. Having established a clear vision and the ability for everyone to participate in carrying out the strategic plan, overall enthusiasm, attitudes and production increased. As F.A. Manske wrote “ High performing leaders do two things to build group cohesiveness and pride. First and foremost, they establish and articulate visions of what could be for their organizations. Often these visions take the shape of “heroic goals” – possible levels of performance or achievement of such scope or magnitude that, if achieved, substantially enhance the status and prestige of the organizations. Everyone likes to be part of a winning team, especially if the team is a big winner”. (Manske, 1987, p26)

The information collected during the literature review not only stimulated our thoughts and processes pertaining to “Circular Leadership” but also supported many of our current participatory methods. The ability to get everyone actively involved in the betterment of the department and generate progressive results with a sense of pride and accomplishment was becoming institutionalized in the Lake Zurich Fire/Rescue Department.

PROCEDURES

Research information for the project was solicited and developed through the use of a survey (Appendix B), strategic planning sessions and a literature review.

The ultimate goal of the survey and subsequent strategic planning session portion of the project was to develop a new ten year comprehensive plan that would provide consensus direction in identifying future needs of the department with realistic timetables to achieve them. The survey portion of the project was also designed to collect specific information and personal thoughts regarding (1) what the fire station needs would be for the next ten years; (2) what the new vehicle needs were for the next ten years; (3) what the new personnel needs were for the next ten years and how they would be assigned; (4) what response changes will be needed in the next ten years; (5) what they perceive as the Fire/Rescue Departments future goals and mission; and (6) what they believe the future Fire/Rescue values should be.

As part of the planning process, each department member (57 in total) was given a survey and asked to complete and return it to the department secretary no later than August 29, 1997. The goal of the survey was to collect technical input from ALL department personnel pertaining to their personal perception of department needs and desires for the next ten years. That step was used to generate a wide variety of department input from all rank and file. Allowing employees the opportunity to present their ideas and perspective on future department issues rather than just implementing orders already determined via the traditional chain of command method resulted in many creative/innovative ideas, honesty and out of the box thinking.

Once the survey information was collected and tabulated, a department Strategic Planning Session was held to review and prioritize the survey results into a workable plan. The results of the Strategic Planning Session would then be integrated into the Village of Lake Zurich Master Plan. Limitations of the survey process included ideas and thoughts from only those 39 out of 57 employees that participated. That response number is consistent with the participation and enthusiasm level on the department. Many employees choose to sit back and let others dictate their future direction while some feel they don't have the time to get involved with anything outside their immediate job duties. The whole concept of "Circular Leadership" was to change the attitudes and create a desire for employees to want to get involved. Allowing participation while simultaneously using employee ideas in the planning showed a sense of worth to the employees and triggered their desire and enthusiasm to do a good job. Employees doing a good job generated the respect and recognition from their supervisors and peers, displayed a sense of pride with the employee and created ownership from those that participated in the outcome.

RESULTS

From the 57 surveys sent out to department personnel, 39 were completed and returned. Although only 39 surveys were returned, it did reflect a significant number of department personnel wanted to provide input into the planning process.

The information obtained in question number one, **What do you feel our Fire Station needs will be for the next ten years after station #4 is built**, indicated that 100% or 39 of the

employees surveyed felt that no new stations would be needed unless new area was annexed into the district. That question was used to evaluate station and response time needs as development continued. The question was also used to confirm the previous station planning direction provided by an outside Fire Protection Engineer as well as the direction set by the Fire Chief in an earlier plan. Lastly, we wanted to see if the employees were being rational in their fiscal planning and truly understood the consequences and impact new stations would pose to the district.

Question number two, **What are the new vehicle needs for the next ten years**, pertained to only new vehicles added to the fleet and not replacements. That question reinforced the fact that the current department fleet provided a nearly complete mixture of necessary apparatus with a few exceptions. The majority (36 out of 39) of those surveyed identified the need for a ladder truck to compliment the fleet. The same majority indicated the need for a new Engine and Ambulance when station #4 was built. Other apparatus identified by a minority (less than 5%) were a staff vehicle and a pick-up. That question was used to generate creativity by identifying different response or combination units that would maintain or reduce fleet inventory yet also address future needs.

Question number three, **What were the personnel needs for the next five years**, provided a variety of data. To summarize the input, the majority of those surveyed indicated the need for 12 additional personnel to adequately staff station #4 in the same manner as Stations 2 and 3 when it is opened. Discussion followed regarding creative staffing ideas based on different financial resources available at the time. The majority also felt that the immediate hire of 3 new

personnel to allow the Shift Commander/Captain to come off the Engine assignment and respond in the Command Unit was required. That recommendation was supported by staff discussion regarding the number of personnel allowed off per day and the increased demand for hireback shift coverage. Also indicated as future personnel needs were the addition of a Training/EMS Coordinator, Administrative Captain, Fire Prevention Inspector and part time Clerk for data entry.

In 1998, the addition of three Firefighter/Paramedics became necessary. The total number of daily response personnel would not change but the Captain would be removed from the Engine and assume the twenty-four hour role of Command. The past practice of using the Chief or Deputy Chief as Command during business hours left many voids in coverage while they attended meetings, were off on vacation and on holidays or weekends. With three stations and another proposed later in the year, it was crucial to have the Captain/Shift Commander in the Command unit to direct emergency operations and respond to the other stations as necessary to supervise, direct and evaluate shift personnel. The purpose of this question was to determine the operational needs of the department pertaining to personnel while simultaneously soliciting creative and innovative ideas/methods of staffing. Since personnel created the most significant financial impact on the department, we were curious as to how the surveyed group planned on generating and maintaining funding to support increases.

Question number four, **What response changes were needed in the next five years,** was the question that provided the most variety of recommendations. All suggestions were discussed in detail at the department strategic planning session and consensus gained on needs

and timetables. The consensus was to remain consistent with our last two stations and develop station #4 as a jump company crew also. With the addition of a ladder truck, station #1 would change to an ambulance/truck jump crew as well. Many of the ideas and thoughts discussed would be brought up again at a future date when more detailed planning was complete. This question was used again to solicit creative and innovative response ideas. Discussion with subsequent implementation regarding Automatic Aid Agreements and First Response Contractual Services were also developed at those Strategic Planning meetings.

Question number five, **What were the departments future goals and mission**, indicated that the entire department held high standards for themselves personally and as a total unit or team. The majority consensus gained from this question was that the dedicated personnel of the Fire/Rescue Department wanted to provide the highest quality services in the most efficient and professional manner. The mission would be achieved by the continued effort and emphasis the department placed on training, fire prevention/education, technological advancements, strategic planning and career development.

Question number six, **What were the departments future values**, was a hard one for most personnel to prioritize. The majority of those surveyed listed Professionalism, Dedication, Efficiency and Honesty/Integrity as primary values. Several others listed **ALL** values as shared number one priorities. Several personnel prioritized but followed up with a written statement indicating " All are equally important". This question was used to determine the attitude and beliefs of the personnel so that a common mission statement for the department could be

developed. Understanding and identifying the employee values helped dictate the motivational factors that would be used in maintaining their interest and enthusiasm.

After review of the survey results, it became much easier to outline a specific plan for providing continued service. The survey intent to also solicit new individual ideas and thoughts proved to be a success. Employees that took the time to complete the survey were pleased to be invited to participate in the follow-up strategic planning session. Those employees that felt they were just completing another pencil pushing exercise that would end up in the circular file were given a new sense of belonging and ownership in the department. Individual ideas and thoughts were openly discussed and consensus gained on most future planning issues. Although most employees were happy with the results, some that had ideas stifled required a motivational re-charge to get involved again. That charge came in the form of including them on the committee that would move ahead with the project they discussed. Stressing the point that different opinions are a necessary process in coming to consensus allowed those ideas that were stifled to be looked at under a microscope and all issues validated before those stifled employees would allow the committee or project to move on.

DISCUSSION

After tabulating the results of the survey and review of the strategic planning session, it became evident that the employees not only wanted to be involved in department planning but also had much to share in how it should be done. The following discussion content is broken down into three segments in order to clarify and support the research information. First, the study results were compared to the findings of others discussed in the literature review. Second, a summary of the author's interpretation/evaluation of the results. And third, the implications the results had on the organization.

As we compared the findings of others to the results of the survey, it must be mentioned that the research collected in the literature review dealt with those qualities and persuasive traits effective leaders utilized to create a circular/participatory organization and not the end result of the input as it related to strategic planning elements. The results clearly supported the content of the literature review. The department needed to coordinate many programs and functions and did not have the senior staff to accomplish all of them. The results supported the literature review by showing the desire of most department personnel to participate and achieve a sense of belonging in what affects them on the department. Once a sense of belonging was accomplished via the survey and strategic planning session, the commitment by the those that desired to contribute in meaningful work with reasonable control of their own destinies took over. By gaining consensus on department planning, employees felt a sense of ownership and stepped forward to work on implementing the program or project ideas.

The results of the strategic planning session also indicated that employees had the ability to provide valuable input and were willing to put forth the time and effort to implement them if they were empowered to do so. Practicing what we learned in the literature review, we began by realizing the fact that we must believe in the potential of our people. Allowing them to move forward on projects with the opportunity, and understanding, that mistakes will be made during the process was a difficult decision to live with. The difficulty centered on the whole issue of shared power. Research supported the fact that in order to achieve circular leadership, the organization would need to be willing to share the traditional power with those throughout the organization. Our results paralleled that theory but not to the extent we thought. Power to have a voice in the process surpassed the power to make critical decisions in our organization. Employees wanted to share their thoughts and ideas but expected, and were most comfortable, with a senior staff officer making the final decisions. The staff's original concern for giving up the decision power under a "Circular Leadership" structure was eliminated based on the outcome of the results.

The best lesson learned in the literature review and the one that was most evident and critical based on the results was the motivation factor necessary to achieve the goals. The processes used to generate the results sparked a high motivation atmosphere with the employees. The secret to success for us was to maintain that atmosphere and not stifle the employees from performing. The results of the questions that dealt with the department mission and values helped us identify and determine the motivational factors that we would need to focus on. Keeping programs exciting and upbeat while showing a sense of accomplishment generated status, recognition and in some cases extra overtime dollars in their pockets.

As far as the authors interpretation/ evaluation of the results, he concluded that they were exactly as planned and anticipated. After researching the project, it was the intent of the author to mirror the positive elements of the literature review and utilize them in the process. Getting everyone involved, collecting new ideas and thoughts, sharing the workload, and achieving desired goals was the purpose of the project. By taking the research data and formatting it into a workable process was all that was needed to achieve the goal of this project.

The end result indicates the strong desire for employees to be involved with those things that have a direct affect on their job. By soliciting personal opinions in our comprehensive plan, I can safely say more ideas, pride and understanding was generated than any other previous planning method. The common link that makes or breaks an organization is communication. It is my opinion that the communication on our department is much better because of this process and every effort has been made to continue and maintain it. Personnel on the Lake Zurich Fire/Rescue Department can now proudly say they have a voice in the departments future. Those employees that decided not to participate in the participatory process were informed that they can no longer legitimately complain about how things are done since the direction was based on department consensus in which they had an opportunity to be part of. The results provided the department with a new ten-year comprehensive plan that had the support of the department personnel and the best interest of the residents at hand. The energy level and morale of the department had also increased as a result of the process. Personnel were developing and maintaining programs in committee and bringing them forward for discussion and implementation utilizing the comprehensive plan and department budget as a guide.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the literature review, strategic planning sessions and survey results, it was the authors recommendation to continue the practice of “Circular Leadership” in the Lake Zurich Fire/Rescue Department. The continued practice and maintenance of “Circular Leadership” will be accomplished by utilizing the following methods.

The authors referenced in the literature review and the survey participants acknowledged the fact that “Circular Leadership” was a recommended method of accomplishing the goals and objectives of an organization. That acknowledgement generated support by the increased quality and quantity of the employee’s performance while participating on the various committees. Based on the results, the senior staff felt comfortable with delegating some of their responsibility to the various committees and empower them to make decisions that affected their specific program. A lesson learned after we empowered the employee to make decisions was the issue of the amount of time it took to complete tasks. Since most of the committee members worked a 24 hour shift followed by two (24 hour) days off, the time frame to accomplish established goals was somewhat long. One method used to correct the problem was to include members from each shift on the committee so that each day follow-up work could be accomplished. Another method used to provide some enhanced accountability and time management was the creation of a department task board. The task board was created and displayed at the headquarter station with complete access by all personnel. The objective of the task board was to identify all department working projects and allow daily status checks/updates pertaining to the project to be made. The task board provided current information and project status while tracking projected time lines. One of the problems encountered with the use of the task board was the updating process.

Several personnel would forget or choose not to update the board and would result in confusion or duplication of efforts. The process implemented to correct that problem was re-locating the task board into the Deputy Chiefs office where he could track the projects on a daily basis and receive regular input from the Shift Commanders and various committee members.

Another recommendation that was developed based on the results was the development of a regular schedule for officer/staff meetings. Meetings were scheduled monthly with the senior staff and quarterly with the other officers. Included and invited to participate at the officer meetings were the Union Executive Board, Acting officers and Committee Chairman. The purpose of the meetings and group make-up was to provide regular communication on department issues and projects with the opportunity for those personally involved to attend and explain their progress. Along with those scheduled meetings, the open door policy was reinforced by the Chief for anyone on the department that needed guidance, direction or resources to accomplish their tasks. Since the schedule of meetings had been posted and implemented, personnel outside the ranked structure (re: Union Board and Acting Officers) have yet to attend. Review of the reasoning behind the low attendance stemmed from peer pressure from some officers who felt it was an earned privilege for only officers to attend and that they would pass on the information to the shifts. This issue caught me somewhat off guard and made me realize that my organizational focus has drifted to a committee structure rather than a traditional command structure. Although my thinking was just that, my responsibility and alliance with the officers had to be re-established and my position made clear on the importance of their position. Self esteem issues and personal pride in the ranked structure had to be maintained and recognized in the total process.

Another reason identified for low attendance outside the officer rank was the issue of pay. All officers were compensated for their attendance while the others were not. That was a financial issue and methods of modifying the policy were being investigated.

A motivation recommendation also proposed was the development of an employee incentive program to reward those employees who achieved desired goals. That recommendation was based on keeping employees motivated and providing some recognition for a job well done. Preliminary discussion had suggested the development of a mixed rank committee to work on the project and research current methods being used elsewhere. It was our thought to include ribbons as a recognition symbol with a different color to designate the program the project affected. (re: Emergency Medical Services, Fire Suppression, Fire Prevention/Education, etc.) We had learned that peer recognition and the individual pride employees generated from contributing to the department were two excellent motivational areas to focus on. Although it appeared money was always welcome and/or expected for performing, the sense of ownership employees developed from starting and finishing a project many times took precedence.

The above recommendations adequately address the original problem of completing required tasks in a timely manner while simultaneously getting everyone involved. The research material and subsequent survey results identified and reinforced the essential elements to be used in the process. Although this research project appeared to address the original problem and purpose, we had developed other challenges as a result. We now must continuously motivate and challenge our employees or they will lose interest. As we move into a period of department

maintenance rather than growth and the construction of stations, hiring of personnel and purchase of equipment diminishes, we must find other methods of keeping our personnel motivated and involved in department activities and planning.

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APPENDIX A

TO: All Personnel

FROM: Chief Terry Mastandrea

DATE: August 19, 1997

SUBJECT: Comprehensive Planning (Technical Information)

The Lake Zurich Fire/Rescue Department is beginning to develop a new Comprehensive Plan that will provide direction in identifying future needs of the department with realistic timetables to achieve them. As part of the planning process, each department member is asked to complete the attached survey and return it to Jan no later than August 29, 1997.

The goal of the survey is to collect technical input from **ALL** department personnel pertaining to your personal perception of department needs and desires out into the next ten years. Once the information is collected, we will hold a department Strategic Planning Session to review and prioritize that information into a workable plan. The results of our Strategic Planning Session will then be integrated into the Village of Lake Zurich Master Plan.

Please take your time in answering the survey questions and provide us your open and honest thoughts and ideas regarding our future service and program needs.

Thank You.

APPENDIX B

Service Questionnaire For Use In The 1997 Village of Lake Zurich Fire/Rescue Department Comprehensive Plan FIRE/RESCUE PERSONNEL

Name: _____

Rank: _____

Station: _____ Shift: _____

Date: _____

1) What do you feel our **Fire Station** needs will be for the next ten years after station #4 is built?

☐ No New Stations

☐ Add Station(s)
How many? _____

☐ Close Stations

2) What are the NEW VEHICLE needs for the next ten years? (Do not count depreciated vehicles)

☐ Engine

☐ Truck (only)

☐ Quint

☐ Ambulance

☐ Squad

☐ Command Unit

☐ Pick-up

☐ Staff car

☐ Other _____

5) What do you perceive as the Fire/Rescue Departments *Future Goals and Mission*?

3) What are the NEW PERSONNEL needs for the next ten years?

Enter number and type

3a) If new personnel are indicated above, how would you assign them?

Station 1 _____

Station 2 _____

Station 3 _____

Station 4 _____

Other _____

4) What response changes are needed in the next ten years? Explain as best as possible.

Station 1 _____

Station 2 _____

Station 3 _____

Station 4 _____

Other _____

6) What do you believe the Fire/Rescue Departments ***Future Values*** should be?
Check -off and prioritize

- _____ ☐ Professionalism
- _____ ☐ Dedication
- _____ ☐ Honesty
- _____ ☐ Experience
- _____ ☐ Integrity
- _____ ☐ Concern for Citizens
- _____ ☐ Attentiveness
- _____ ☐ Knowledge
- _____ ☐ Alertness
- _____ ☐ Fairness
- _____ ☐ Courtesy
- _____ ☐ Good Communicator
- _____ ☐ Efficiency
- _____ ☐ Appearance
- _____ ☐ _____
- _____ ☐ _____

Please return the survey to the department secretary no later than August 29, 1997.

Thank you for your time and participation

APPENDIX C

LAKE ZURICH FIRE/RESCUE DEPARTMENT

1997 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

September 17, 1997

SUBMITTED BY;

CHIEF TERRY MASTANDREA

AND MEMBERS OF THE

LAKE ZURICH FIRE/RESCUE DEPARTMENT

FISCAL YEAR 1998/99

PERSONNEL

Four (4) new Firefighter/Paramedics are requested at a cost estimate of: \$200,000

Three new personnel are necessary to allow the Captain/Shift Commander to respond in the Command Vehicle instead of on the Engine. As an Engine crew member, the Captain can not adequately manage the fireground or emergency scene. The Captains have many administrative duties that are not able to be completed in a timely manner due to response on all routine calls. The daily staffing levels require 11 personnel per day on a shift made up of 13 personnel. Vacations and other assigned days off drop staffing levels to minimum (11) each day. Sick days, outside training, injuries, medical leaves of absence and meetings require the need to hireback personnel at time and a half rates for shift coverage

One (1) Training/EMS Coordinator \$14,000

The Training/EMS Coordinator is requested to manage the operational and administrative needs of the fire, emergency medical and specialized rescue programs. Required daily training, continued education, mandated reporting/quality control procedures and program management has dramatically increased over the last few years. This positions duties and responsibilities have justified the need for a full time promoted position (Captain) who reports directly to the Deputy Chief. The creation of this position necessitates one of the Firefighter/Paramedic hires above.

One (1) Part Time Clerk **\$10,000**

The part time clerk will perform clerical duties during the absence of the Department and FPB Secretary and also assist on special projects as needed.

Promotion of (3) Lieutenants for Station #3	\$10,000
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Promotion of three Lieutenants for recently opened Station #3 to add to the chain of command and to direct span of control.

VEHICLES

Replacement of Engine 3213, 1990 Darley Pumper Squad	\$260,000 **
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This replacement is required due to the high repair costs for repetitive breakdowns of a poor quality vehicle. The maintenance division has put roughly \$90,000 into parts and equipment to keep this vehicle on the road. The lack of reliability caused us to accelerate the depreciation period from the normal 15 year cycle to 8 years. In 1998 the vehicle will be depreciated out and the funds to replace it in the Capital Equipment Replacement Fund.

Replacement of Chief Car 3290	\$26,000 **
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The Chiefs Car will be depreciated out in 1998 and replaced with a vehicle off the State Contract. Car 3290 will be reassigned to the Deputy Chief for daily use.

OTHER CAPITAL ITEMS FY98/99

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Cost</u>	
1.	Knox Box Security System	\$ 7,000	**
2.	(2) Exterior Doors Sta #1	\$ 1,000	**
3.	Vehicle Exhaust Filters- Phase 1	\$45,000	
4.	Exterior Brick Work Sta #1	\$10,000	
5.	CAD Software from ETSB	\$ 4,000	**
6.	Thermal Image Device	\$25,000	
7.	Structural Firefighting Boots (leather)	\$ 8,000	**
8.	Wireless CAD System Sta #1,2	\$18,000	
9.	Remodel Sta #1 Kitchen	\$20,000	
10.	Carpet Classroom Sta #1	\$ 2,000	
11.	Tables/Chairs Classroom	\$ 3,000	*****
12.	Storage Building	\$ 2,500	
13.	Roof top Simulator	\$ 2,000	
14.	Bunk Room Partitions	\$10,000	
15.	Black Top Work Sta #1	\$ 5,000	

** indicates the items are still in the proposed 1998/99 budget.

***** indicates the items were purchased in 1997/98 budget with donation funds.

Items not budgeted in FY98/99 will be re-evaluated, prioritized and carried over to the next budget year.

FISCAL YEAR 1999-2000**PERSONNEL**

No new personnel are projected

VEHICLES**Replace Ambulance 3245 \$110,000**

Ambulance 3245 will be fully depreciated and have had served two years in reserve status. Replacement funds will come from Capital Equipment Replacement Fund.

Replace Brush Truck 3270 \$25,000

The Brush Truck itself will be replaced with a heavy duty pick-up truck and the skid mount pump moved from the old unit to the new one. Unit 3270 will be reassigned to the Training Officer for use in carrying equipment, supplies and attending meetings.

OTHER CAPITAL ITEMS

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Cost</u>
	Any Items from Previous Budget	
1.	Vehicle Exhaust Filters - Phase II	\$45,000
2.	Air Conditioners (3) Sta #1	\$ 6,000
3.	Carpet Sta #1 Offices/Bunk/Day Room	\$ 2,500
4.	Disaster Siren Upgrade	\$12,000

FISCAL YEAR 2000-2001**PERSONNEL****Additional Fire Inspector/Educator \$35,000**

The addition of one civilian Inspector/Educator to the Fire Prevention Bureau. Increased building growth and educational demands requires the added personnel to keep up with department and public expectations. The Inspector will report directly to the Assistant Fire Marshal.

Twelve (12) new Firefighter/Paramedics - November - May 6 months \$300,000

If the Village acts on the recommendation of the Fire/Rescue Department for staffing station #4 with a similar Jump Compnay system as stations #2 & #3, twelve (12) new Firefighter/Paramedics will need to be hired six months prior to opening of station #4 (November 2000).

VEHICLES

Replace Squad 3255 \$250,000

Squad 3255 was fully depreciated out in 1995 and fulfilled its useful life expectation in 1997 of ten years. Since the replacement vehicle will accommodate interior space for special team members to change (re: dive, haz-mat, trs) and more exterior storage for equipment, the replacement cost is higher than amount depreciated and extending the life built additional funds.

Deputy Chief Car 3290 \$25,000

The Deputy Chief Car 3290 will be fully depreciated and replaced with a unit off the State contract. Funding will come from Capital Equipment Replacement Fund.

Ladder Truck \$325,000

The first installment (50%) of the Ladder Truck will be made this year with the expectation of Station #4 opening next year. The Truck can not be staffed as recommended until station #4 is operating as planned. Delivery time for a Ladder truck is 10-12 months and will take place in the following budget cycle.

OTHER CAPITAL ITEMS

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Costs</u>
1.	New FT Gear (12)	\$12,000
2.	New FT Uniforms (12)	\$ 7,000
3.	Equipment Ladder Truck	\$30,000
4.	Architectural Design Sta#1 Second floor	\$75,000

FISCAL YEAR 2001-2002

PERSONNEL

Twelve (12) Firefighter/Paramedics full year salary **\$600,000**

Twelve (12) Firefighter/Paramedics hired in last fiscal year will now be on the payroll for a full year instead of only six months as indicated in FY2000-2001.

Add Administrative Captain **\$69,000**

Administrative Captain to coordinate and manage all admin duties for all four stations. Position salary includes costs to hire new FF/PM, promote Lt. and Admin Captain.

VEHICLES

Replace Ambulance 3247 **\$110,000**

Ambulance 3247 will be fully depreciated out and have had served 2 years in reserve status. Funding for replacement will come from Capital Equipment Replacement Funds.

Ladder Truck - Second Installment **\$325,000**

This is the second installment for the Ladder Truck which will be delivered this budget.

OTHER CAPITAL ITEMS

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Costs</u>
1.	Disaster Siren Upgrade	\$12,000
2.	Addition Sta#1 second floor	\$750,000

FISCAL YEAR 2002-2003

PERSONNEL

No new personnel are needed this fiscal year.

VEHICLES

Replace Engine 3212 **\$260,000**

Engine 3212 is fully depreciated after 15 years and has served 5 years in reserve status. Funding for replacement will come from Capital Equipment Replacement Fund.

OTHER CAPITAL ITEMS

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Costs</u>
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No Capital items projected at this time

FISCAL YEAR 2003-2004**PERSONNEL**

No new personnel are needed this fiscal year.

VEHICLES

No new vehicle purchases projected

OTHER CAPITAL ITEMS

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Costs</u>
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No Capital items projected at this time

FISCAL YEAR 2004-2005**PERSONNEL**

No new personnel are needed this fiscal year.

VEHICLES

Replace Ambulance 3246	\$110,000
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Ambulance 3246 will be fully depreciated out and have had served 2 years in reserve status. Funding for replacement will come from Capital Equipment Replacement Funds.

OTHER CAPITAL ITEMS

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Costs</u>
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No Capital items projected at this time

FISCAL YEAR 2005-2006

PERSONNEL

No new personnel are needed this fiscal year.

VEHICLES

No new vehicle purchases are projected

OTHER CAPITAL ITEMS

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Costs</u>
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No Capital items projected at this time

FISCAL YEAR 2006-2007

PERSONNEL

Hire Six (9) new Firefighter/Paramedics	\$450,000
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Increase personnel at Station #3 from a three person jump company to a staffed Engine and Ambulance. This will be driven by increased call volume.

VEHICLES

Replace Fire Prevention Van (3292)

Fire Prevention Van will be fully depreciated out after ten years of service. Funding will come from Capital Equipment Replacement Fund.

Replace Dive Boat (3252)	\$25,000
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Dive Boat will be will be fully depreciated out after 15 years and would have served an additional 5 years after depreciation for a 20 year useful life cycle.

OTHER CAPITAL ITEMS

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Costs</u>
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No Capital items projected at this time